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ALA American Library Association

May 27, 2010

Honorable Charles Schumer
Chair, Joint Committee on Printing
313 Hart Office Bldg.
U.S. Senate
Washington, DC 20510
Sent via fax: (202) 228-3027

Honorable Robert Brady
Vice-Chair, Joint Committee on Printing
206 Cannon House Office Bldg.
U.S. House of Representatives
Washington, DC 20510
Sent via fax: (202) 225-0088

Dear Chairman Schumer and Vice Chairman Brady:

The American Library Association (ALA) has long cared about the public's ability to access government documents. We were gratified that the committee held a hearing to speak with the nominee for Public Printer, William Boarman, and hope that you will include this letter in the hearing record.

For over 140 years, the U.S. Government Printing Office (GPO), through the Federal Depository Library Program (FDLP), has made government information available at no cost to the public.

Over time, technologies have changed and it is the responsibility of the Public Printer to ensure that GPO and the FDLP are updated. A matter of great importance to the ALA's over 62,000 members is the digitization of government documents. The FDLP is a collection of over 2.2 million documents that once digitized will vastly improve public access to these historical and cultural resources of our nation.

These resources cover virtually every facet of US history, government policy, and administration. Digitizing these materials will allow members of the public the ability to understand their culture and history in new, meaningful ways and encourage greater civic engagement.

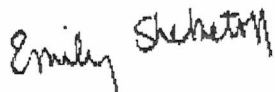
GPO recently launched the Federal Digital System (FDSys), a centralized location for no-fee public access to federal government information. It is important that FDSys have the ability to systematically ingest both digitally born and digitized historic collections. In today's work environment, it is common to create digital documents that may never be formally printed. If these documents are not ingested into FDSys, there would not be true transparency of the government.

The Public Printer plays a vital role in ensuring that the American public is able to access government documents. In order to guarantee open access to these documents, it is essential that

the Public Printer be supportive of moving the GPO into the 21st century and ensuring that all Americans will be able to access all formats of government documents.

Attached is a resolution that was passed in January 2010 by the American Library Association's governing council promoting digitization and calling upon the Congress to support these efforts.

Sincerely yours,

A handwritten signature in cursive script, reading "Emily Sheketoff".

Emily Sheketoff
Executive Director
ALA Washington Office

2009-2010 ALA CD# 20.2
2010 ALA Midwinter Meeting

**RESOLUTION TO SUPPORT DIGITAL INFORMATION INITIATIVES
AT THE U.S. GOVERNMENT PRINTING OFFICE**

WHEREAS, The Federal Depository Library Program (FDLP) was designed to provide no-fee permanent public access to government information through a cooperative network of depository libraries; and

WHEREAS, The U.S. Government Printing Office (GPO) recently launched the Federal Digital System (FDSys), a centralized location for no-fee public access to federal government information; and

WHEREAS, FDSys must systematically ingest both digitally born and digitized historic collections; and

WHEREAS, FDSys should allow for the systematic gathering of in-scope documents that may not have otherwise been included in the FDLP; and

WHEREAS, Ingesting both born-digital and digitized historic collections into FDSys will result in an increased need for cataloging to improve access to government information; and

WHEREAS, The GPO requires additional funding for its Cataloging and Indexing and the Federal Depository Library Programs in order to meet this expanded responsibility; and

WHEREAS, Further developments and enhancements of FDSys are vital to the FDLP's ability to provide no-fee public access to government information; and

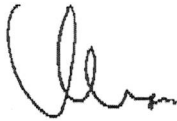
WHEREAS, The full implementation of FDSys is vital to the public's right to access information from the legislative, executive, and judicial branches of government; now, therefore, be it

RESOLVED, That the American Library Association (ALA):

1. Works to ensure that the government fulfills its obligations to create, authenticate, collect, disseminate, and preserve government information.
2. Thanks GPO for the work that has been done in FDSys development and urges that GPO demonstrate its capacity to ingest both access and preservation copies of digitally born and digitized historic collections into FDSys.

3. Urges GPO to establish partnerships to conduct demonstration projects for systematic gathering and accessing digitally born content.
4. Urges GPO to establish partnerships to conduct demonstration projects for creating and accessing digitized historic collections.
5. Urges Congress to reaffirm no-fee public access to, dissemination of, and preservation of authentic government information by providing sufficient and sustained funding to the GPO to support Cataloging and Indexing, and the Federal Depository Library Program for systematic gathering of digitally born and digitized historic collections.
6. Urges Congress to provide sufficient and sustained funding to the GPO to support FDSys

Adopted by the Council of the American Library Association
Wednesday, January 19, 2010
In Boston, Massachusetts



Keith Michael Fiels
ALA Executive Director and
Secretary of the ALA Council